

Dear GP,

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust now operates an **Adult Autism Diagnostic service**.

Individuals with ASD present with difficulties with:

1. Social interaction: the ability to relate and interact with others in a socially reciprocal way
2. Social communication: the ability to communicate verbally and/or non-verbally
3. Imagination / flexibility of thought: the ability to understand and predict other people's behaviour, to understand abstract ideas and to cope with unfamiliar situations
4. Strong and intense interests that can become pre-occupations or obsessions

Individuals with ASD may also present with difficulties sustaining employment and forming social or romantic relationships; sensory sensitivities (e.g. aversion to loud noises, particular fabric textures etc). Further information about the key features of ASD can be found on the National Autistic Society (www.autism.org.uk) and Burgess Autistic Trust (www.burgessautistictrust.org.uk).

Where clients present to you with these difficulties, and/or are requesting an assessment of ASD, please refer to Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust mental health intake team via your usual route in Bromley (Stepping Stones), Bexley (Erith Centre) or Greenwich (Ferryview Health Centre). Please make it clear that the referral is for an assessment for a possible Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Upon receipt of the referral, clients will be offered an initial assessment with the mental health intake team. They will be asked to complete two screening measures. If these meet the clinical cut-off, they will be directly referred to the Adult Autism Diagnostic service for further assessment. If they are not reporting sufficient or clear indicators of ASD then they may not be offered a full diagnostic assessment. A letter explaining this will be sent to the client and yourselves. At the initial assessment if the client is also presenting with additional mental health needs these will be identified and recommendations will be made about appropriate support, including whether a referral to IAPT services would be advisable.

Sincerely,

Dr Elizabeth Kilbey
Consultant Clinical Psychologist

Dr Emma Taylor
Clinical Psychologist